

Tips for disabled students at the University of Edinburgh – Part 2

In their previous post, Seth gave some advice on what to do before you start university, so this next blog will touch on what to do AFTER you start your studies, and help you get the most out of them.

When meeting your Personal Tutor for the first time talk about your disability and how it might impact your studies (if you are comfortable doing so)

Your Personal Tutor (PT) will be your point of contact for any questions you have that is not related to a specific course, as such it would be a good idea to let them know about your disability or health condition so that they can help you to the best of their abilities.

Your Personal Tutor

After matriculation, set a meeting with the Student Disability Service ASAP to activate your schedule of adjustments

The Student Disability Service (SDS) needs you to be fully matriculated to be able to make your schedule of adjustments live and share it with the appropriate staff. The beginning of the year is always busy, so be prepared to not be able to have an appointment for at least a couple of weeks, so the earlier you are able to book an appointment, the better.

If you aren't provided one from the get-go, ask

your PT to put you in touch with someone from your School's Student Support Office

Your School's Student Support Office (SSO) is there to help as the intermediary between you and others if you need anything specifically linked to the school. For example, room access or adjustments that are only approved at the discretion of a course organiser.

Fill a 'Group Change Request Form' with the Timetabling team as soon as possible if your assigned tutorial isn't going to work for you

The form is the only way to request a change in tutorial groups for all students. If the time you were assigned doesn't fit for any reason due to your disability or health condition, you should make sure to request a change ASAP.

If the rooms assigned to your lectures and or tutorials aren't fully accessible for you, get in touch with your School's SSO

Your contact within the School's SSO will be able to contact the Timetabling team with your accessibility requirements to have your tutorial group or lecture slot changed to a more accessible room. Make sure to be clear about what your needs are. You can find more information on accessible areas within the University on the AccessAble website.

Make sure you have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan set up as soon as possible if you have a physical disability that might affect your ability to use the usual emergency plan

Once your rooms are set, get in touch with your School's SSO to get a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) set up. It makes sure that in case of emergencies you can be evacuated quickly and securely. This should be done at the start of each semester.

If your circumstances change, let your PT, SSO and the SDS know ASAP

Though we always hope they don't, sometimes our conditions worsen or something else comes up. If this happens let everyone know as soon as possible, especially if you need new adjustments set up.

Your course tutors are the people you'll have the most contact with – talk to them

You don't have to mention your disability or health condition if you don't want to, but it might be a good idea to at least make them aware, especially if it affects your ability to come to tutorials or need a bit more support from them.

Don't let FOMO push you to the point of exhaustion

You don't have to make lots of friends, become a member of five societies or go out every other night. Being limited due to a disability or health condition is never fun, but you shouldn't push yourself to the detriment of your health just because you want to be like any other student.

I hope you find this and my previous blog useful and that it will encourage you to give University a go with confidence.